1968

# EC68-1518 Corn Insects Above Ground

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# CORN INSECTS - ABOVE GROUND

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**1. EUROPEAN CORN BORER:** Corn borers spend the winter as larvae in corn stalks and other plants. Moths emerge in spring and lay eggs on early planted corn. Eggs are laid in masses of small, flat, overlapping eggs on the undersides of leaves. Larvae feed in the whorl, boring into stalks after they are about half grown. Second brood moths appear in late July to September. They prefer late corn on which to deposit eggs.

**2. SOUTHWESTERN CORN BORER:** This insect is not as yet a pest in Nebraska. Its life cycle is similar to the European corn borer, except that in late summer, the Southwestern borers work their way toward the base of stalks and overwinter in the tap root, causing the corn to fall over.

**3. COMMON STALK BORER:** Damage to corn is usually only in the field margins, where the borers have moved in from weedy or grassy margins. The insect bores into the stalks and feeds in the whorls leaving a "ragged appearance."

**4. CHINCH BUG:** Chinch bug damage to corn usually occurs in early July after adjacent fields of small grain are harvested or become mature. This insect overwinters as an adult in bunch grasses. In the spring they fly to small grains where the first generation develops. When grain matures, they migrate to corn or sorghum to continue reproducing. Injury is sometimes severe, especially following dry spring weather. Damage in Nebraska is usually only in the eastern ⅓ of the state.

**5. CORN EARWORM:** Early infestations may develop in the whorl of corn plants. Feeding in this area leaves a ragged appearance. After silking, eggs are deposited on silks, the young worms moving to the ear tip. Earworms are cannibalistic. They vary in color from dark brown to green.

**6. TRUE ARMYWORM:** Adults deposit eggs in rank grassy vegetation and small grain. Corn is damaged when armyworms are migrating from grassy areas in search of food. Most damage occurs in spring. Apparently adults of this insect fly north in the spring from southern states.

**7. CORN ROOTWORM BEETLES:** All three kinds occur in Nebraska. The most important species is the western corn rootworm which is present in all corn growing counties. The northern species is primarily in eastern Nebraska. Severe chewing of silks before pollination can result in partially filled ears. Late silking fields are more likely to be damaged. Early silking corn is usually pollinated before large numbers of beetles emerge.

**8. GRASSHOPPERS:** Four kinds of grasshoppers commonly damage corn. Damage usually begins in field margins from grasshoppers that migrate from grassy borders where eggs hatch. Injury to corn is greater during dry years. Losses can be reduced or prevented if grasshoppers are controlled in margins before they move into the field.

**9. CORN LEAF APHID:** These small, greenish-blue plant lice are often found in colonies in the tassels and upper parts of corn plants. They seldom cause injury to corn in Nebraska.

**10. CORN FLEA BEETLE:** These small, shining black, jumping beetles injure corn in the early season. After plants are 5 to 8 inches tall, they usually outgrow injury. Controls are sometimes necessary when growing conditions are poor, and large numbers of beetles are present on small plants.

**CONTROL INFORMATION:** These color illustrations are designed to help identify some of the more important insect pests of corn above ground. University of Nebraska Entomologists prepare control leaflets that are revised each year. For the latest control leaflets, visit your local county agent, or write to the Department of Entomology, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68503.

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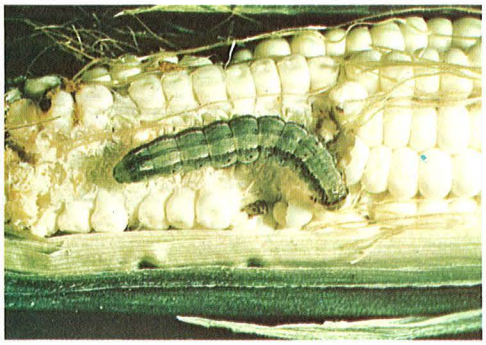
**For safe and effective use of insecticides, always identify the problem correctly.**

1. European corn borer (early leaf feeding and mature borers)

8. Grasshopper

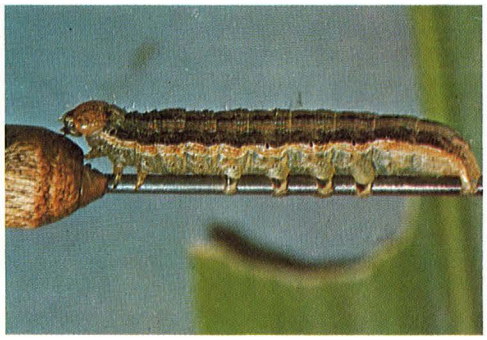
2. Southwestern corn borer



5. Corn earworm

9. Corn leaf aphid

3. Common stalk borer



6. Armyworm

10. Corn flea beetle and damage

4. Chinch bug

7. Corn rootworm beetles (left to right: Northern, Western and Southern) These beetles clip silks causing poor pollination shown at far right.

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